



## **Regionally Important Resources Plan Fact Sheet**

The Department of Community Affairs (DCA) in accordance with the Georgia Planning Act requires the identification of regionally important resources, development of a plan for protection and management of these resources, as well as for review of activities potentially impacting these resources. The purpose of this requirement on the Coastal Regional Commissions is to: (1) enhance the focus on protection and management of important natural and cultural resources throughout the state; (2) provide for the careful consideration of, and planning for, impacts of new development on these important resources; and (3) improve local, regional and state level coordination in protecting and managing of these important resources. Regionally Important Resources are any natural or cultural resource area identified for protection by the Coastal Regional Commission (CRC) following the minimum requirements established by DCA.

The CRC is required to:

- Involve regional stakeholders in a comprehensive effort to identify the important natural and cultural resources in the region. The primary means of involvement is the solicitation of nominations for regionally important resources from individuals, interested organizations, local governments and governmental agencies. All nominations must include:
  - A narrative of the resources value and vulnerability which addresses the regional importance of the resource and indicates the degree to which the resource is threatened or endangered.
  - A map of the recommended resource boundaries that also identifies any municipal or county boundaries falling within the proposed resource boundaries.
- Prepare the Regional Resources Plan that should include the following components:
  - A Regionally Important Resources map for the region;
  - Guidance for appropriate development practices that should be utilized by developers for designing new developments to be located within one mile of regionally important resources; and
  - General policies and protection measures that should be utilized by local governments in making decisions that affect regionally important resources.
- Submit the Regional Resources Plan to DCA and other affected parties for review and comment before formally adopting and implementing.

The CRC will evaluate the value and vulnerability of all resources nominated by regional stakeholders. All resources that the CRC determines to have sufficient value and vulnerability to be considered regionally important will be included on the Regionally Important Resources Map.

## Elements of the Regionally Important Resources Map

DCA requires the Regionally Important Resources Map to include:

- DNR State Vital Areas
  - Coastal marshes
  - Salt marshes
  - Tidal wetlands
  - Resources covered by the Environmental Planning Criteria (required buffer zones, jurisdictional wetlands, high pollution susceptibility groundwater recharge areas, water supply watershed, river corridors)
- Nominated resources determined to be considered regionally important
- Any natural or cultural areas already preserved
  - State parks
  - Wildlife management areas
  - Conservation easements
  - Etc.
- Other natural or cultural resources not nominated but the CRC determines should be included.
- linkages between resources to form, to maximum extent feasible, a continuous regional green infrastructure network – should encompass a wide range of elements including:
  - natural areas (wetlands, woodlands, waterways, wildlife habitats)
  - public and private conservation lands (public and private nature preserves, wildlife corridors, greenways, parks)
  - public and private working lands of conservation value (forest, farms, ranches)
  - outdoor recreation and trail networks

## Tentative Regionally Important Resources Timeline

Regional Resources Plan kickoff .....	May 2010
Request for nominations .....	July 13, 2010
Nominations due .....	August 30, 2010
Select Regionally Important Resources .....	September 2010
Draft Regional Resources Plan .....	September – November 2010
Publish draft for public review .....	December – January 2011
Conduct public hearing .....	February 2011
Transmit to DCA for review .....	March 2011
Completeness check .....	March 2011
Notification of interested parties.....	March 2011
Review of Regional Resources Plan .....	April – May 2011
Final report of findings and recommendations .....	May 2011
Adoption of Regional Resources Plan .....	June 2011

